



General Council News

Corner Brook, NL

Friday, August 14, 2015

Vol. 42 No. 6



The United Church of Canada

New Moderator Jordan Cantwell

by Kevin Cox

The United Church of Canada has picked a Saskatchewan minister with a passion for social justice who was raised as Anglican as its 42nd Moderator.

The Rev. Jordan Cantwell, who serves Delisle-Vanscoy United Church in River Bend Presbytery, was chosen on the fifth ballot.

Cantwell, who blew kisses to the standing ovation from commissioners, was joined on the podium by her

partner, Laura Fohse, a diaconal minister at McClure United Church in Saskatoon.

The Moderator-elect thanked the commissioners for holding her and the 11 other people who sought the church's highest office in their prayers.

"I commit to all of you and to our church that I will hold all of you, I will hold our church, in my prayers and in my heart as we walk together these next three years as we continue to do Christ's ministry in new ways and old ways together," she said.

Cantwell has been involved in social justice work for three decades and was an international observer in South Africa for the Ecumenical Monitoring Program in 1993.

She grew up in the Anglican Church, left it when she was in her 20s to seek out other spiritual paths, and joined the United Church in the late 1990s.

Cantwell was ordained in 2010 after studying for her Master of Divinity at St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon.

In her speech to commissioners immediately after her election was announced, she stressed discipleship and hope.

"We know that the life of the church is measured not by budgets, figures, and statistics, but by its faithfulness to the gospel," she said. "The reports and proposals coming before this court reveal a passionate commitment to the gospel values of justice, compassion and reconciliation."

Cantwell will be installed as Moderator at a service tonight.



Une nouvelle modératrice !

par Stéphane Gaudet

C'est la pasteure de la Saskatchewan Jordan Cantwell qui a été élue jeudi le 13 août par le Conseil général pour devenir la 42^e modératrice de l'Église Unie du Canada.

Douze personnes avaient été nommées pour le poste, et il a fallu se rendre au nombre maximum de tours de scrutin, cinq, avant qu'une des nommés-es obtienne la majorité absolue des voix exprimées.

Lors du discours qu'elle avait prononcé mardi, et dont une portion non négligeable était en français, la pasteure Cantwell avait insisté sur le fait que nous devions « toujours garder l'Évangile au cœur de tout ce que nous faisons, y compris dans nos efforts pour moderniser nos structures, équilibrer notre budget et établir nos priorités ».

En conférence de presse peu après son élection, Jordan Cantwell a affirmé qu'elle avait hâte aux trois prochaines années. « Pour certains, ce sera un temps de panique, pour d'autres, un temps de célébration ; je veux accompagner les gens où qu'ils se trouvent dans leur parcours » tout comme Dieu, a-t-elle voulu rappeler, « est toujours avec nous dans notre parcours, peu importe où l'on est ».

À une question posée en français sur ce que les ministères francophones apportent à l'Église Unie, elle a commencé par répondre qu'elle n'était pas bilingue et qu'elle souhaitait le devenir le plus tôt possible, pour ensuite répondre en anglais que les ministères en français apportent à l'Église une perspective autre, notamment sur le Canada, une histoire, et un contact avec la communauté chrétienne élargie « qui nous enrichit si nous écoutons ces voix. Nous avons besoin de nos voix francophones, de nos voix autochtones, jeunes, aînées, car notre Église est plutôt anglocentrique, à prédominance blanche, et composée en majorité de personnes d'âge moyen à avancé ». Jordan Cantwell est pasteure dans une paroisse où le ministère auprès des jeunes est la priorité, elle consacre la moitié de son temps de travail à ce ministère.

Parlant du processus de nomination et d'élection au poste de modératrice comme une bénédiction pour elle, elle croit que les gens d'aujourd'hui ont besoin d'espoir, de confiance et de courage pour faire ce que Dieu nous demande de faire en ce monde. « L'Évangile

est partout autour de nous, mais nous avons tendance à ne pas regarder hors de l'Église, alors nous ne le voyons pas ! »

Jordan Cantwell est née à New York de parents américains qui ont déménagé dans les Prairies canadiennes alors qu'elle était enfant. Pasteure de l'Église Unie Delisle-Vanscoy à Delisle, près de Saskatoon, depuis sept ans, elle vit à Saskatoon avec son épouse Laura et leur fille Hope.



The United Church of Canada

An Interview with Jordan Cantwell

by Jim Cairney

The Rev. Jordan Cantwell, the Moderator-elect of The United Church of Canada, exuded passion and energy as she spoke with media following her election.

"My understanding of ministry and my role as a minister is to accompany people," said Cantwell on Aug. 13. "The stories of our faith teach us that God is with us on the journey. Wherever we are, always God was in that."

"We are fundamentally a people of hope," said Cantwell. "Our story is one of hope. We have something to offer the world."

"We as a church need to tap into the hope that is at the core of our faith. It's easy to get lost in the business and in the fear [of change]."

She said that while the General Council decisions about restructuring appear inwardly focused, the courage and mutual trust that are being exercised can be carried into ministry in the world.

Cantwell, 48, said the point of being a gospel people is the need to share the gospel and to recognize it when and where it is bubbling up in the world.

The Moderator-elect admitted that she has a capacity to hear and respect a diversity of voices. She has a passion for justice and for ecumenism and a deep commitment for reconciliation with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. "It is critical and urgent for Canadians and churches," said Cantwell. "It's a timely one for the church right now."

She is working on becoming fluently bilingual. "Our francophone churches bring to us a history, a perspective, our anglophone churches don't know," said Cantwell.

"We need our francophone voices, our Indigenous voices, our young voices, our old voices," said Cantwell, noting that the United Church is anglo-centric, predominantly White, middle aged, and older.

Cantwell is New York born, and was raised on the Canadian prairies from the age of two.

After working at the Centre for Christian Studies in Winnipeg, which trains diaconal ministers, in 2006 she moved to Saskatoon to study for her Master of Divinity (M.Div.) at St. Andrew's College, Saskatoon.

She sought ordained ministry, with an M.Div. as part of her formation. She recognized that she was well-grounded in justice work, prophetic ministry, and community development work, but said that she wanted further education in the sacraments and in the pastoral and priestly sides of ministry.

Before and after ordination, she has served the Delisle-Vanscoy United Church, 43 kilometres southwest of Saskatoon, for seven years.

She exuberantly sings the praises of the congregation that she serves three-quarter time. The congregation has picked up a number of the tasks of ministry so she can focus almost half of her time on youth ministry. Its members support and affirm the benefits of her work in the wider United Church.

In 2011, she was part of the Moderator's exposure tour to Israel and Palestine. "You cannot be for Israel or

for Palestine," she said. "We have to be for Israel and Palestine. Israel will never have peace and security unless Palestine has peace and security, and Palestine will not have peace and security unless Israel has peace and security," said Cantwell.

"If we are pro-Israel, we must be pro-Palestine, and if we are pro-Palestine, we must be pro-Israel. We cannot separate one people from another," said Cantwell.

Her journey to being elected Moderator has been one of discernment for her and for the General Council that elected her.

"This is what the church has discerned, so I'm honoured, and I'm humbled," said Cantwell.

She was surprised by some of the people who asked her to run. "So I had to take seriously what they were asking," she said.

Cantwell said she needs to anchored, so she has developed the spiritual practice of daily centring prayer.



Council Moves Away from College of Ministers

by Kevin Cox

Commissioners to General Council 42 don't want a college of ministers.

At the end of a long day of working out wording and principles for a new church structure, commissioners moved away from a proposal from the Comprehensive Review Task Group (CRTG) that would have set up an independent college of ministers to accredit, oversee, and discipline ministers.

Instead, the Council will consider a proposal that would establish a national office of vocation that would have many of the functions and responsibilities of the college. A national office of vocation was recommended by the special Sessional Committee that examined responses from within the church to the CRTG's call for an independent body.

The CRTG cited concerns about the current structure that sees ministers disciplining their colleagues. It recommended there be an association of ministers to provide support for clergy and a college for discipline, oversight, and accreditation.

Several commissioners said the college would not reflect the conciliar nature of the church and would only copy what is done in many other professions.

Ken Thomas of Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario said his call to ministry is very different than his previous job as a certified general accountant, where he was a member of a professional college. "It's just two completely different worlds. I was trained by the CGAs. I was licensed by them. I was ordained by this church. I am in covenant with this church. I am answerable to this church, not some other body we create that is just ministers independent of this church," he said.

However, Jim McKibbin of Toronto Conference said the church needs a professional approach to ministry. "We have all heard the horror stories of a non-professional approach of our good and faithful lay and ministerial members who do the best that they can but simply aren't able to deal with the weal and woe of hiring and supervision and disciplining of ministry in this time," he said. "We need to jump into the future, and the college of ministers is the future."

Commissioners could spend another seven hours on the restructuring proposals before the Council concludes today.

So far the debates have centred on the wording of the restructuring proposal and the principles surrounding the responsibilities of the proposed three governing bodies of the church. Commissioners agreed that retired ministers would be included in the ministry personnel who would be members of the new regional council.

As well, the court wants to see one level of assessment on the communities of faith to fund the new structure.

At the end of the day, Moderator Gary Paterson congratulated commissioners for their progress on the review and pledged that decisions on the new structure will be made before the Council rises tonight.

On a couple of occasions speakers urged commissioners to work together for the church.

Sean Handcock of Maritime Conference observed that there was a lot of talk about power and control in the debate about the responsibilities of the proposed governing bodies. "This is the language of empire," he said. "We need to trust in God, to live into our covenants."



Marie Wilson Addresses Council

by Jeff Cook

The ending of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) "is just the beginning of reconciliation and you, as the United Church, need to be part of it," Dr. Marie Wilson told the 42nd General Council Aug. 13.

Wilson is one of the commissioners of the TRC.

Recollecting her childhood, Wilson recalled there being a map on the wall of her public school, the "rosy pink" section being the Dominion of Canada. She said that she never learned about our "rich pre-Dominion history."

"We were learning half-truths about the history of our country," she said.

Wilson said that the six-year work of the TRC has been to reveal "hidden truths about residential schools" so that Canada could begin "a process of individual and collective reconciliation."

She said she was grateful that her grandchildren were growing up knowing their identities and having family support, unlike the students of the residential schools. "They grew up with numbers, rather than with names," Wilson said. She added that they grew up without the love and support of grandparents; they grew up often alone, abused, and angry.

The residential school survivors have demonstrated examples of "living miracles," Wilson said. "Some publicly reclaimed their names and their right to be happy." Many are learning not to blame themselves and to "see themselves as the brave children they are."

Wilson said she hopes that the work of the TRC will be widely heard and taught "so the country can be shifted to new understandings and new realities."

"Are we a land of sacred values or just a land of economic opportunities and ventures?" she asked.

She said that Canadians must work together to bring an end to the real "Two Solitudes" of Canada, that of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The "glaring gaps" in economic and social conditions must be removed "so that all Canadians may be enriched by the rebalancing of a shared country."

"We have a long way to get there from where we are," she said.

"We have organized our personal lives to look past each other, and we have organized our political lives to talk past each other."

She said that too often Canadians act as if they love Aboriginal art more than they love Aboriginal people. "Art is no substitute for respectful relationships," she said.

Wilson said that she has hope in the goodness of the people, noting that in the healthiest of democracies, the people are the government.

Her greatest hope is with the children of this country: "Children are the heroes of the residential school story," she said.

They suffered for so many years, "but they are the ones who refused to be defeated and are now reclaiming their identities."

They are now leading all Canadians to healing and spiritual strengthening.

Wilson said that during her time with the TRC she learned that prophecy is not about predicting the future, but about "divine utterance of what is essential to the present."

She urged people to always feel outrage at injustice, to hope for what is possible, and to respect that every life has the potential to make a difference.

Love, she said, "has the power to transform a life, a relationship, a church, a country."



Marie Wilson



Perry Bellegarde Offers Thanks and Invitation

by Jeff Cook

Perry Bellegarde, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, offered thanks and an invitation to the United Church.

"I say thank you to The United Church of Canada for being a leader in reconciliation and for your enduring commitment to social justice," Bellegarde told commissioners to the 42nd General Council.

"Our journey together as a people is just beginning," he said.

Bellegarde said there remains a large gap in the quality of life between First Nations and other Canadians. Although the federal government has made two apologies, "We continue to face educational systems which ignore our languages, our histories, our knowledge systems, and our values," he said.

Canada is sixth on the United Nations Quality of Life Index, Bellegarde noted, but when the Quality of Life Index is applied to First Nations, they are rated 63rd.

Bellegarde said that difference is due to racism, overcrowded housing conditions, high incidents of Indigenous youth and teenage suicide, high rates of incarceration of Indigenous people, and poor health conditions.

"This gap is not good for our people and not good for our country," he said.

Reconciliation offers an opportunity to "rebuild this country in the way our ancestors envisioned."

Bellegarde said reconciliation would mean honouring promises to live together in peaceful co-existence and mutual respect, sharing the wealth of this land, ensuring the free, prior, and informed consent of First Nations in government decisions, enshrining Indigenous languages as official languages of Canada, and continuing to push for a national public inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

"Most important of all, reconciliation involves all of us, all of you," he said.

"A Canada that commits itself to closing the gap," he said, is on a path to a "stronger, vibrant, prosperous Canada for all the citizens of this land."

Closing the gap will require funding. He said there is a 2 percent cap—the "now 20-year-old

'temporary' cap on funding for First Nations essential services from Aboriginal Affairs."

He said there need to be investments made in training, education, and good housing for First Nations.

"I believe that Canadians understand that when Indigenous people win on any front, all Canadians win," he said. "I believe Canadians have a responsibility and a self-interest in eliminating the gap."

Bellegarde invited the United Church to join First Nations in calling for action. He asked people to reach out to other leaders, artists, business people, young people, Elders, and church groups in their communities.

"We need your voices to join ours—to build a chorus of Canadian voices calling for change," he said.

He invited people to ask candidates in the federal election what their strategy is for addressing such issues as missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, lands and resource sharing, investments in training and education for First Nations, and implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations.

He also asked the church to help mobilize the vote.

Bellegarde said "reverse integration" could offer hope to the global world facing climate change.

He asked people to imagine what could happen if an Indigenous world view began to shape the way people see creation. Indigenous people, he said, believe that the "two-legged" tribe is connected to four-legged creatures; to creatures that fly, crawl, and swim; to plants; to the moon and sun; and to Grandmother spirits who watch the water.

"Together in unity and strength we will make a difference," he said. "We can close the gap. Please join me on this journey."



The United Church of Canada

Perry Bellegarde

Council Reminded of Impact of Fossil Fuel Decision

by Jeff Cook

The President of Alberta and Northwest Conference acknowledged the church's unity in the midst of its diversity. Speaking on a point of personal privilege at General Council 42, Paul Douglas Walfall spoke about the impact of the Council's decision regarding its holdings in fossil fuel companies.

"In Alberta, we are part of the one church of The United Church of Canada," Douglas Walfall said, adding that they recognize there is sometimes disagreement within the church.

He asked the General Council to remember that the decision "carries many consequences for us in Alberta." He also asked that people "not demonize those in the oil and gas industry who are witnessing to the church with their time, talents, and treasures."

Douglas Walfall said that e-mails and texts received since the decision indicate that many from his Conference will be going back to "difficult pastoral relations."

"We will walk back into those situations bravely and courageously," he said.

He asked commissioners to "acknowledge we are working through issues in Alberta" and to "support us with your prayers" and "with your words not to make an already tenuous situation more tenuous."

Douglas Walfall's words echoed those of Moderator Gary Paterson, who reminded commissioners that in Christ "there are no winners or losers."

Paterson said that, as a church, we will work together, work with compassion, and work to be one.

The General Council had passed a proposal to "encourage the United Church of Canada Foundation and direct the Executive of the General Council to take active steps to sell their holdings in the 200 largest fossil fuel companies."



Church Recommits Itself to Work of Reconciliation

by Jeff Cook

The United Church of Canada has recommitted itself to the work of reconciliation.

The 42 General Council approved a multi-point proposal directing the church to

- re-affirm its commitment to building right relations among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples
- direct the Executive of the General Council to consider actions in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action
- develop strategies and materials to assist the church in supporting, educating, and implementing the Calls to Action
- encourage collaborative initiatives on the Calls to Action with ecumenical partners, Indigenous organizations, and the parties to the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement
- encourage congregations to engage in education and actions for reconciliation



Full Communion with United Church of Christ, USA

by Jim Cairney

The 42nd General Council has voted unanimously and joyfully to enter into full communion with the United Church of Christ, USA.

"It's a commitment to being intentional around what are the things that we can do together in mission and ministry, and how that can strengthen the lives of our two churches," said the Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, Minister for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations with the United Church of Christ, USA, in an interview with *GC News*.

The American denomination had voted unanimously in June to enter into full communion with The United Church of Canada.

The Council viewed a video of the American vote, which featured a rendition of "O Canada," and then commissioners sang "The Star-Spangled Banner."

There are things that our churches have historically done together around poverty, ecology, and environmental justice in a North American context, said Thompson.

"The differences are noted, but not in any ways that would affect our life together—the ways that are different are places where we can learn from one another," said Thompson.

She said she anticipates that there will be invitations to share in each other's events, such as inviting United Church of Canada youth to a national youth event in Orlando, FL, in July 2016.

"This is a beginning. The Full Communion Agreement is a start. It's an open doorway to opportunities and possibilities for both churches," said Thompson.

The Rev. Geoffrey Black, the former General Minister and President of the American denomination, said, "It's something that's been in the making for a long time."

"From our vantage point, this makes sense. We're two United Churches on the North American continent," said Black in an interview with *GC News*.

He said he believes that his church can learn from The United Church of Canada's relationship with First Nations people.

He noted that in 1993, the United Church of Christ, USA, apologized to Native Hawaiians for the role of missionaries in the overthrow of the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893.

Official documents will be signed today in worship, and a further worship celebration will be held in October.



The United Church of Canada

Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson



Pleine communion avec la United Church of Christ

par Stéphane Gaudet

L'Église Unie du Canada et la United Church of Christ, une Église des États-Unis, sont maintenant en pleine communion. Le Conseil général a adopté en plénière à l'unanimité jeudi le 13 août une proposition en ce sens. La United Church of Christ avait adopté une motion semblable le 28 juin dernier à son Synode général réuni à Cleveland.

La United Church of Christ compte environ 5 000 paroisses et un million de membres. Ses origines remontent à l'arrivée des Pilgrim Fathers du Mayflower au Massachusetts en 1620, qui étaient des congrégationalistes, appelés « séparatistes » à l'époque parce qu'ils voulaient des paroisses séparées de l'Église d'Angleterre et indépendantes les unes des autres.

Aussi la United Church of Christ est-elle particulièrement bien implantée en Nouvelle-Angleterre encore de nos jours bien qu'elle soit présente partout sur le territoire étatsunien.

La pleine communion est un accord entre deux ou plusieurs Églises qui souhaitent approfondir leurs relations et leur coopération dans la mission et le ministère. Elles s'engagent à reconnaître mutuellement la validité de leurs ordinations et de leurs sacrements, de sorte qu'un-e pasteur-e de l'une puisse travailler dans une paroisse de l'autre.

Malgré la frontière internationale qui les sépare, les deux Églises ont beaucoup en commun : même engagement pour la justice, même inclusivité, même rôle pionnier dans plusieurs domaines. La liste de premières sur le site Web de l'Église américaine est impressionnante : première confession protestante à avoir ordonné un Afro-Américain (1785), première confession chrétienne à ordonner une femme (1853), première Église protestante historique à ordonner une personne homosexuelle (1972), et elle fut parmi les premiers groupes religieux à demander l'abolition de l'esclavage au début du XVIII^e siècle. L'Église a été l'une des rares aux États-Unis à prendre position (dès 2005) pour la légalisation du mariage entre personnes de même sexe.

S'il s'agit d'un quatrième accord de pleine communion pour la United Church of Christ, c'est une première pour l'Église Unie du Canada. Ces deux



L'Église Unie du Canada

Rev. Geoffrey Black

Églises, membres de la Communion mondiale des Églises réformées, avaient déjà les mêmes partenaires œcuméniques.

L'accord entrera en vigueur en octobre 2015 lors d'une célébration à Niagara Falls, ville située à la frontière des deux pays. « Nos frontières se touchent, nous partageons les mêmes eaux, nous sommes déjà un. Nous sommes un peuple rempli de l'Esprit », a dit Danielle Ayana James, pasteure de l'Église Unie du Canada et membre du comité de travail qui a élaboré l'entente.



Mutual Recognition of Ministries in Philippines, Korea

by Jim Cairney

The United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP) and the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PROK) are both entering into mutual recognitions of ministries with The United Church of Canada.

General Council 42 voted unanimously to approve the agreements with the partner denominations.

Bishop Reuel Marigza, General Secretary of the UCCP, and the Rev. Tae Jin Bae, General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), were present for the decisions of the General Council on Aug. 13.

In an interview with *GC News*, Marigza said, "We have had this emphasis for migrant ministry. One of our main exports is our people—2,500 people are leaving daily. That means a huge Filipino diaspora.

"What we want is that they would be ministered unto in the places where they go, in places with partners, so that ministry would be extended as well," said Marigza.

In an interview with *GC News*, the Rev. Tae Jin Bae, General Secretary of the PROK, said The United Church of Canada has sent 150 missionaries to Korea

since church union in 1925. He said that in 1953, the PROK was expelled from the Presbyterian Church Korea (PCK) for its more liberal theological views and biblical understanding, and since that time, The United Church of Canada is the only denomination to have continued links with the PROK. Other denominations sustained links with the PCK.

Former Moderator Lois Wilson told the General Council that when she was Moderator (1980-82) and went to Korea, Sang Chul Lee (Moderator 1988-90) explained that there were two types of Presbyterian churches in Korea: those that believe in Jesus and expect to go to heaven, and those that believe in Jesus and expect to go to jail.

"The PROK has taught us much about discipleship in a secular state," said Wilson.

Bae said, "We have a theology of God's mission. The United Church of Canada has the same theology of God's mission. Mutual recognition means we are walking together to be part of God's mission.

"The United Church of Canada came to Korea, walking in very diverse ways—in hospitals, universities, education, justice seeking, and with local churches. They have been walking with us."

The mutual recognition agreement will enable the United Church to better minister to new Koreans in Canada.

"You scratched our backs, now we are scratching your backs," said Bae. He noted that Canada is the preferred destination for Koreans considering immigration.

Bruce Gregersen, United Church senior advisor for theology and faith, told *GC News* that the agreements will create a category of ministers in the United Church who are ministry partners.

"The ultimate hope and significance is that we accept the ordination of our partner churches," said Gregersen. "This is a vision of ecumenical growth. We see ourselves expanding mutual recognition agreements."

The PROK has 300,000 members and 1,667 churches. The UCCP is a Protestant mainline denomination with one million members and 2,218 pastors in 3,112 congregations.

Marigza says the UCCP has had a policy to not establish congregations outside of the Philippines. He hopes Filipinos abroad will be integrated into the congregations of partner denominations, like The United Church of Canada.

The roots of the UCCP are Presbyterian, Method-

ist, Congregationalist, Evangelical United Brethren, and Disciples.

In defence of human rights and civil liberties, Bishop Marigza initiated the process of filing court cases against former President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, high-ranking officials, and the military—holding them accountable for extra-judicial killings and other human rights violations against members of his church. Under his leadership, the UCCP formally filed six cases of human rights violations committed against UCCP members.

"The killings have gone down, but that's not to say it's no longer a cause for concern," said Marigza. "Now the killings are more related to economics—mining. The Indigenous people are being targeted."

"Our pastors are being arrested and charged with common crimes. These are harassment suits, and often trumped-up [charges]," said Marigza. He noted that the mutual agreement will help provide a safe place abroad for pastors who need asylum.



The United Church of Canada

Bishop Reuel Marigza

